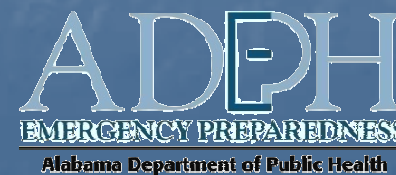


A County Coroner's Role In Fatality Management Planning and Response

Bill Harris, President
Alabama Coroners Association
July 9, 2009
Webcast



Recent planning efforts

- 2008 – series of 11 Fatality Management (F/M) workshops throughout the state
- Alabama Department of Public Health F/M template
- Annual Coroners Conference – upcoming projects (tool kit and webcast)



Why we are here today

- Planning – short term and long term
- A need for each Coroner to seriously consider how a pandemic will affect their county and how they will respond



Coroner Authority

- Code of Alabama (1975) Act 15-4
 - 15-4-2 – Examination of body and report by Coroner



Lee County could expect....

- 5 extra deaths per day for eight weeks for three waves.
- 761 deaths related to influenza in addition to deaths from other causes



Deaths at home

- Follow up and decedent pick up may not be timely.
- Who will be available to pick up decedents?
- Where will decedents be taken if funeral homes are at capacity?



Collection points

- Who will be responsible to run/operate?
- Issues –
 - family/community education
 - cold storage or lack there of
 - decedent identification
 - decedent tracking
 - personal effects



Mass burial planning

- Trigger
- Location
- Security
- Interment and Disinterment
- Decedent tracking
- Identification



Coroner's role during a pandemic

- Change in role with increased death rate
- Reporting (to Coroner from outside agencies)
- Reporting (from Coroner to ADPH and other agencies)
- Expectation



Joint effort with ADPH

- CoronerME
 - Software/laptops grant to standardize day to day operations
 - Data collection
 - Daily death counts during a pandemic
 - Other data elements (future applications)



Coroners must

- be involved with the local fatality management planning
- review the local plan with other authorities
- anticipate difficult questions
- identify potential resources
- collect and report requested data



Coroners should **not**

- fail to plan
- plan alone
- assume you can handle everything
- assume the “Government” will handle fatality management



Questions?

